

The RI CDHH Commissioner approved the minutes for the 12/10/2014 meeting on January 14, 2015.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

December 10, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Attending: Heather Niedbala, Julia Gold, Travis Zellner, Betsy Beach, Todd Murano, James Simon, Nico Sedivy, and Timothy Riker

Commissioner(s) not Attending:

Staff Attending: Steven A. Florio (Executive Director)

Public Attending: Sameth Anderson-Grose, Richard Anderson-Grose, Angelina Anderson-Gorse, Rosa Norberg, Joseph Batiano, and Dorothy Hodge

Communication Accommodations:

Interpreters: Carol Fay (MPA-358) and Christine West (MPA-358)

CART service: Shelley Deming (Allied Reporters)

Location: Conference Room A at the Department of Administration building, 2nd Floor

Vice Chairperson Heather Niedbala called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

Vice Chair. Niedbala conducted a roll call and reported that the quorum was met. She asked the Commissioners that the item, interviewing with the candidate, was moved up to the top on agenda to accommodate a candidate's prior commitment. All commissioners were in agreement with her request.

Review of Meeting Minutes (11/19/2014):

- 1) Tim Riker **made a motion** to approve the November 19, 2014 meeting minutes as amended. Todd Murano seconded. The motion was carried 8-0-0.

CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONERS' SEAT:

Vice Chair Niedbala asked Travis Zellner to facilitate the interview process. Travis agreed to assume the floor assisting the interview process. Zellner introduced a candidate, Joseph Batiano, to all current commissioners and explained an overview of the Commission as to what it is about, why it exists, how it is operated, how often the commissioners meet, what expectations of the commissioners, and a brief of its history.

Zellner confirmed that Joseph Batiano wished to be interviewed in executive session rather than in open session.

James Simon **made a motion** to go into the executive session to discuss on questions for a candidate and to start interviewing with Joseph Batiano. Todd Murano seconded. The motion was carried 8-0.

The Executive Session began at 6:26pm.

Joseph Batiano was asked to be interviewed for the Deaf seat.

The Executive Session was open after Todd Murano **made a motion** and seconded by Tim Riker at 6:46pm.

Todd Murano **made a motion** that the board of the commissioners recommends Joseph Batiano to be appointed by the Governor to serve on the Commission as a Deaf commissioner. Elizabeth Betsy seconded. The motion was carried with 8 - 0.

RICDHH Officers' Reports:

Vice-Chairperson:	No Report
Secretary:	No Report
Treasurer:	No Report

Executive Director's Report:

1. Personnel Update: Mi Ok had taken a hearing loss support specialist training, that's offered by the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). And part of that training includes different articles and a review of the literature as well as different tests that need to be passed. And those tests could be taken as often as needed in order to pass before moving on to the next test. There are four tests in total as well as a final exam. The final exam has to be tried only once. Good news is that Mi Ok has passed, therefore, she is now certified as a hearing loss support specialist.

2. Steve had the opportunity to meet new Lt. Governor Daniel McKee at the Emergency Management Advisory Council meeting and chatted for a few minutes. This meeting was Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts' last as she will move on to serve as the Director of Executive Office of Health and Human Services, replacing Steven Costantino when newly Governor Gina Raimondo takes over.
3. Steve attended the Board of the Examiners meeting, Interpreters for the Deaf, on December 3rd. Arlene Hartwell, who works at the Department of Health providing support to a number of licensure boards. She happens to be responsible for supporting the board of examiners for interpreters for the deaf. She clearly emphasized that the meeting that she had with CDHH staff early in the fall had nothing to do, or had no effect on the letter that was sent out or retracted. The meeting that he had conducted with Arlene also included Pam as well as Holly and the purpose of that meeting was just to introduce themselves and to explain a little bit about the Commission and what they do. There was some presumption that that meeting had something to do with the letter that was sent out. He is glad that she made this clarification that this incident did not happen at all.
4. Budget Updates: No update since Steve reported last month. He said the RICDHH will learn the budget for the agency sometimes in January either right before or during the Governor's State of State Address.

Legislative Update:

1. **Hearing Aids Mandate Coverage** as supported by the State Representative Robert Jacquard. Increase from \$700 to \$1500 to cover the hearing aid per ear per 3 years for people who are 18 years old or older. Increase from \$1,500 to \$2,500 to cover hearing aid per ear per 3 years for children who are under 18 years old.
2. **Board of the Examiners for the Interpreters, RI General Law 5-71.** Steve wanted to recognize the Rhode Island Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf for hosting 1st meeting on December 13th from 1:30pm to 3:00pm in the afternoon at the Warwick Public Library. It will be open to the community, thoughts, and feedback will be solicited. The final version of draft will be shared at the next meeting for Commissioners' review.
 - a. To recognize deaf professionals as interpreters.
 - b. To recognize people who are deaf-blind as consumers.
 - c. To recognize tactile interpreting, communicating with people who are deaf-blind.
 - d. Only one license to work in RI is needed.
 - e. CEUs for certain certification groups are up for dialogue.
3. **POC for 504 Plan and IEPs.** Each school in RI must identify a point of contact person(s) who is responsible for coordinating 504 plan and/or IEPs and report them to the RI Department of Education. This has been supported by the PEPNET2 Stakeholders group including RIDE, RISD, Perspectives Corporation, ORS, and RICDHH.

4. **American Sign Language and English Language Assessment** is required as part of IFSPs and IEPs. Rationale: to eliminate potential language deprivation during the early years of childhood especially for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Some people reserve concerns about timing. Steve responded that the effective date will be on January 1, 2017, not an immediate effective after the passage.
5. **Movie Access Commission** led by the House of Representatives. According to the House Policy Office, 1st meeting for this commission in January 2015 was in the work. Arthur Handy will be the chairperson of this Commission. More information once become available will be shared.

Break – 7:18pm

Meeting resumed – 7:28pm

After a length of discussion, the commissioners agreed to discuss more on Committees' activities at the next meeting.

Approval of 2015 RICDHH Monthly Meeting Calendar

1. Julia Gold **made a motion** to approve the 2015 RICDHH Monthly Meeting calendar with one change, from Nov. 11th to Nov. 4th. Seconded by Jim Simons. The motion was carried 8-0.

Election of the Officers

- 1) Travis Zellner **made a motion** to approve the following elected officers for the Fiscal Year of 2015: Heather Niedbala as Chairperson, Travis Zellner as Vice-Chairperson, James Simon as Secretary, and Betsy Beach as Treasurer. Todd Murano seconded. The motion was carried 8-0-0.

FTE Staff Interpreter

1. No meeting for the committee was held. It was agreed that Julia Gold would contact Wayne Hannon, Assistant Director of the Budget Office, to find out the status of our agency budget. If we don't hear anything from the Budget Office, the letter would be drafted and sent on behalf of the Commissioners with all of their signatures.

Break - 8:22pm

Meeting resumed – 8:25pm

Early Intervention Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Each Commissioner offered their perspective and experience on Early Intervention system in Rhode Island. Some felt training needs to be provided to all service providers. Some felt the Commission should take the opportunity to look into the statewide problem and address them. As the commissioners agreed, the subject of Early Intervention to be discussed continues under the Community Resources Committee that will schedule a meeting prior to the next Commissioners' meeting.

Public Comments:

1. Rosa Norberg
 - a. Appreciated that Steve Florio to take this initiative and appreciated that RIRID will lead the discussion. Announcement of the Date, December 13th from 1:30pm to 3:00pm to review the 5-71 legislation.
 - b. Had procedural questions to handle the legislation going forward.
 - c. RICDHH Interpreter Referral Policies and Procedures
2. Dorothy Hodge
 - a. Shared concerns about RI General Laws, 5-71

Community Concerns:

1. Sameth, Richard, and Angelina Anderson-Grose
 - a. Shared their horrible experience in the Emergency room at a hospital where they involved their daughter to interpret for their family. They are passionate about immediate resolution to this problem.
 - b. They and Steve have been in touch about this issue prior to the meeting and will continue finding time to get together to address this issue.

Vice Chair Niedbala looked forward to seeing everyone in 2015 and then, adjourned the meeting at 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven A. Florio
Acting Secretary